SAGATAGAN
Saint John's OUTDOOR UNIVERSITY
SEASONS

Just Say YES!

SARAH GAINEY

While traveling through the halls of Apollo High School in St. Cloud last April, students had the opportunity to buy a dirt cup. And enough of them did to raise over $100 for a student group at the school working to make positive change at the school.

The group's secret? Besides making sure the cups consisted of pudding, crushed cookies, and gummy worms instead of soil, the students belong to the Youth Energy Summit (YES!) team and are dedicated to educating their peers on the importance of recycling their organic waste at lunch. A recycling program was started because of the initial efforts of a few motivated students on the team. Their efforts convinced school administrators and custodial staff it would show the school's commitment to sustainability and save money by reducing the amount of trash hauled to the landfill.

The school now estimates that half of waste from the lunchroom that normally went to the landfill is instead being recycled and turned into compost! This project by the Apollo team is a great example of what a group of motivated and informed students can accomplish when given the opportunity and support of a program like YES!.

The Youth Energy Summit (YES!) is a program in Minnesota whose goal is to engage and inspire middle and high school students to develop sustainability projects in their schools and communities to help solve today's environmental and economic challenges. Often formed as an after school club like at Apollo or as part of a class curriculum, students work with their coach to complete hands-on projects to better their school. Over thirty other YES! teams across the state are creating change by completing other projects at their own schools and now Outdoor U has a chance to be involved in that change.

The YES! program staff approached Outdoor U last winter to fill a part time coordinator position to help support the teams in our north central region which includes Apollo, Albany High School, North Junior High in St. Cloud, and ROCORI High School (plus 6 others).

As the preK-12 education coordinator for Outdoor U and now as the coordinator for these YES! teams, my job is to act as a resource for coaches, teachers and students, connecting them with the necessary tools to complete their projects. Over 30 YES! teams from across the state will be participating in a variety of events and projects throughout the year, starting with a Fall Summit at SJU on September 30. The teams can interact and

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WWW.YOUTHENERGYSUMMIT.ORG

YES! empowers youth to partner with their community to create economic and environmental vitality through hands-on learning and team-based projects.

- Community engagement
- Renewable energy technologies
- Conservation practices
- Applied science

"At a time when Outdoor U was already looking at topics of energy, climate and sustainability as a way to reach more high school students, the opportunity to work with our region's YES! teams was an obvious fit for expanding our programming."

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Sarah Gainey (right) presents the 2014-15 Apollo High School YES! team with an award for 2nd place in the region for their waste reduction YES! project. SARAH GAINEY.

learn from each other and experts are lined up to discuss climate change and how the students' efforts can lead to solutions.

Teams will then go back to their schools and work on both short and long-term projects, such as fundraising for installation of hydration stations, growing vegetables in a school greenhouse for the lunch room, or collecting and sorting recycling collected by the school. Both large and small, these projects aim to empower students to make positive change.

At a time when Outdoor U was already looking at topics of energy, climate and sustainability as a way to reach more high school students, the opportunity to work with our region's YES! teams was an obvious fit for expanding our programming.

Most of our preK-12 visitors are elementary students who visit on a field trip once a year but for multiple years in a row. We are able to pick these students out immediately, as their first words off the bus often are, "I was here last year! Do we get to go on the floating boardwalk again?" By visiting multiple years in a row, we are hoping these students create a deeper bond with this place while building their environmental awareness and knowledge. Eventually, we hope the experience we provide will inspire them to continue creating bonds with other natural places and become environmentally literate citizens.

Some of the same students who participated in multiple Outdoor U field trips in elementary school are now the high school students at Apollo on the YES! team. Apollo coach Katie Herrboldt has seen the valuable impact YES! has on all kinds of students.

"I have a former member who, through the program her senior year, decided she wanted to work in environmental engineering...but I also have students who do it because their friends are in it. I think that spectrum is important. To have students who want to dedicate their lives to the things you talk about and work on with YES! is so amazing, but to have your casual, tag-a-long student and everything in between is important as well. Even if these kids do not go on to become environmental advocates, they have been exposed to the issues, they have thought about them. When they have their own families and lives outside of high school they will think about where their garbage goes, what is in their drinking water, where their food comes from. They will teach their families about it. I have felt like no matter how involved students are in the program they get something that will benefit them and the environment in the future."

As if implementing an organic recycling program wasn't big enough, last year the Apollo YES! team also wrote, filmed, and edited a video to educate their peers on how to properly recycle everything including organics in the lunchroom. According to Coach Herrboldt, "The video was innovative and inclusive (using Somali translations) for our school. It was so well done it is posted on Tri-County Organic's website and will be used district wide."

With the help of their coach and the support of YES!, these students are able to put the environmental knowledge and awareness they gained on those early Outdoor U field trips and elsewhere into action through sustainability and energy projects at their school.

From exposure to knowledge and knowledge to action: exactly the kind of "closing the loop" environmental educators everywhere hope for.

SARAH GAINEY *is the environmental education coordinator for preK-12 education at Outdoor U. She is also now the coordinator for YES! teams in north central Minnesota through a new partnership between Outdoor U and Youth Energy Summit.*

DEFEND our Title - National Outdoor Champion

MADELINE OLSON '17

SIGN UP TODAY! (Yes, you) **ONCAMPUSCHALLENGE.ORG**

Stepping onto Saint John's campus has always reminded me of stepping into an oasis. Turning the bend, the sounds of the highway fade away and the monotony of the blacktop is replaced by a sprawling prairie, intertwined with wetlands and mist laden lakes against a deep forest background. It is not uncommon to look up and see a Great blue heron soaring across the brilliant blue stroke of the morning sky, flapping its magnificent wings in greeting, *welcome home*.

The sense of place that entirely defines Saint John's and Saint Ben's is not a building or a gaudy sign. Its identifying feature is the outdoors. For the two years I have lived here, the nature of the two campuses has served as the source of my adventure and exploration, lending me its trails, its trees, and its treasures as the foundation for great stories and unforgettable memories. And somewhere between late night chapel walks, enigmatic Lake Sarah discoveries, raft swims and early morning runs on the Wobegon Trail, the outdoor identity of this place has shaped my identity too.

Every person who has set foot on these campuses can tell a story of their interaction with the land. It is the first thing we see, and it is the first thing we remember. We have all, at some point, fallen in love with and been touched by the nature that surrounds us here. This summer while working at Outdoor U, I was able to see first-hand just how many people are affected by the great outdoors.

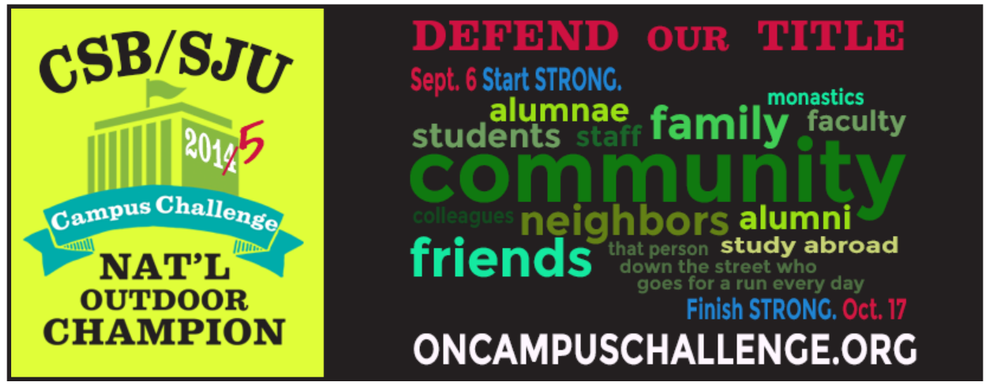
In May and June kids piled off of school buses, and followed student naturalists across the boardwalk, their faces lit up as they discovered dozens of teeny tiny wetland creatures beneath their feet. Lake Sagatagan filled up with students crammed into canoes, carefree and eager to explore. Benedictine sisters and curious sightseers traipsed through the Saint Ben's monastic woods, reverently basking in the summer sunshine. The idyllic shores of the Gemini lakes were scattered with fishermen, casting their poles into the depths, content to patiently wait for a bite. Stickworks became abuzz with families and visitors scurrying through its doors.

All of these people had been brought together, just as all of us have, because of the call of the outdoors. We share a common appreciation for the unrivaled bounty of Minnesota wilderness. It sets us apart and it brings us together, creating the unique community of people that each and every one of us is familiar with.

Fortunately, we have been given another opportunity to spread the word about who we are, and what defines us as an outdoor community. In 2014 Saint Ben's and Saint John's entered the Outdoor Nation Campus Challenge and handily defeated the nine other colleges to be crowned National Outdoor Champion. This year, we have a chance to defend our title and the stakes are higher: fifty-seven schools and six weeks to prove that we truly are the most "outdoorsy" community around.

It is time to lace up your hiking boots and hit the woods. Grab your tent and head to a place where you can see the stars. Put your paddle in the water or go pump up your bike tires. Find a new daily walk. Channel your inner six year old and climb that tree. Break out your camera and dare to seek out something beautiful. Wherever you are, whatever you do, do it outside. Tell your friends and family, and tell the person next to you at the grocery store. We have a title to defend and we cannot do it alone. We are adventurers. We are explorers. We are teachers. We are students. We are wilderness fanatics. We are community. *We* **ARE** *outdoors.*

MADELINE OLSON *is an office assistant for Outdoor U and a junior biology major at the College of Saint Benedict.*



Everyone Should Start College in the Wilderness

Tyler Thompson '16

I dip my paddle into the lake and calmly rotate, catching water one stroke at a time. With each stroke we glide forward, shattering the stillness of the unusually calm lake. Above us, not a cloud in the sky; below us, not a ripple in sight; around us, the unhampered beauty of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness takes our breath away. We paddle across Saganaga Lake, the largest lake in the BWCAW heading southwest towards Red Rock Lake.

Fifty miles south, on the shores of Lake Superior, one by one they descend the ledge of the cliff, only to face the exhilaration of the climb back up. While I conquer a ten thousand acre body of water, they conquer the rock faces of Shovel Point. We cannot hear each other's laughter, riddles or campfire talks, but we are all surrounded by good company and incredible beauty – the experience of Collegebound.

– Tyler Thompson, August 21, 2012

Collegebound canoeing campsite in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, August 2015. Tyler Thompson.

More than just a canoeing and rock-climbing trip, Collegebound is an optional pre-orientation experience for first year students at the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University. It is truly a once in a lifetime experience to spend one week in transition to college with your future classmates, friends and mentors in a wilderness setting. With the philosophy of "it's your trip," each group decides their daily schedule, canoe route and meals. Groups consist of seven to nine incoming students while two or three current students facilitate each group to ensure safety and offer guidance and support.

Students come from all over the United States (and sometimes the world) and all have different levels of experience. This allows less experienced participants who are new to the outdoors to learn from those who have more experience. The peer-to-peer learning environment allows the students to effectively work together building their teamwork and communication skills, while facilitating individual self-growth. Students learn about wilderness ethics, canoeing, climbing and camping and are faced with group challenges that they must overcome along the way. The relationships formed between students in each group and students and facilitators are invaluable for the next four years of college and beyond.

"I was on some of the very first Saint John's Collegebound trips, and after nearly 20 years, I still have very fond memories from my trips to the Boundary Waters and Crown Lands wilderness. And, I still have many close relationships that continue today that I formed while I was on those Collegebound trips." -Tom Stock, SJU Athletics Director

Many students say that they "wish they could go on this trip over and over." From forming friendships, to learning wilderness skills and transitioning into college, the impact that Collegebound has on students is invaluable.

The Collegebound program at CSB/SJU has been in existence for seventeen years impacting the lives of more than 500 students. In 2015 participation nearly doubled from the previous year of thirty-three participants to sixty-three, not to mention being full by late May! Twice as many students means twice as many canoes, camping supplies and student facilitators. The increasing demand to participate in Collegebound and similar pre-orientation programs across the nation has encouraged us to set our sights high for future years: 100 students in 2016, 500 students in 2020.

What sets Collegebound apart from similar pre-orientation trips is the final night of camping in Grand Marais. Participants from both rock-climbing and canoeing trips all camp together on the shores of Lake Superior. This allows students to meet everyone who attended a trip, not just those in their respective group. They have the opportunity to share stories and experiences from the trip, and make even more lasting friendships to begin their college experience. What defines the success of the program is not just the seventeen consecutive years of trips or increasing participation numbers, rather it is seeing the interactions of all the participants together. The greatest joy of all is seeing the friendships form amongst students and knowing the lasting impact the trip will have on them.

I have been fortunate to get to experience Collegebound in three unique ways: first as a participant, second as a trip facilitator, and lastly as the Collegebound coordinator. Seeing Collegebound through these three roles has allowed me to improve my outdoor leadership, planning and organization skills, and to really grow as a person.

Had I not gone on Collegebound as an incoming student, I would not have had the same experience here at CSB/SJU. As a student, athlete, captain, manager and mentor, I attribute everything I have achieved in college to that one week in the wilderness.

Now, after more than 600 miles traveled, thirty-two canoes, nine vehicles and two moose sightings, sixty-three participants and twenty-four facilitators returned on August 26 from Collegebound 2015; lives are forever changed and future leaders have arisen leaving a lasting impact on participants, facilitators and the greater CSB/SJU community.

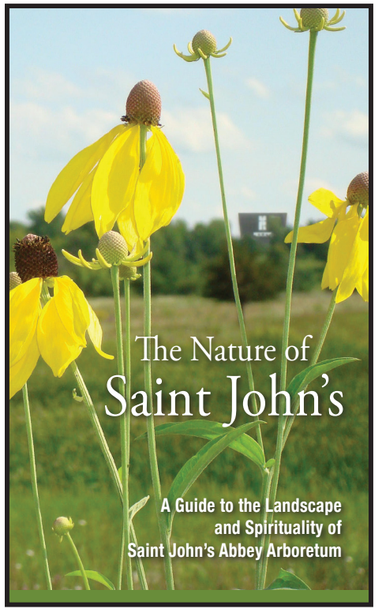
SJU student Daniel Beyer scales the rocks above Lake Superior, an apt metaphor for the heights he can climb during his next four years at CSB/SJU. Megan Lundquist.

Collegebound 2015, the largest ever: 63 first-year CSB/SJU students, 24 current student facilitators, 1 week in the wilderness. The experience of a lifetime. Megan Lundquist.

Tyler Thompson *is the 2015 Collegebound coordinator, a Peer Resource Program facilitator and manager at the Outdoor Leadership Center. He's also, apparently, a college student set to graduate with a degree in environmental studies in 2016.*

Happenings

Jenny Kutter '03



The Nature of Saint John's

A guide to the landscape and spirituality of Saint John's Abbey Arboretum

Edited by Larry Haeg '67 and Jennifer Kutter '03

Generations of students have lived near, explored and studied in Saint John's Abbey Arboretum, all of them impacted in some way by the landscape that so deeply bonds people to this place. Nowhere is that connection more apparent than in this new collaboration by SJU alumnus Larry Haeg and CSB alumna (and Outdoor U staff) Jenny Kutter. Billed as a "lectio on nature," this is a field guide to both the natural and human history of the Abbey Arboretum. Featuring detailed maps and descriptions of hiking trails, descriptions of 120 species of vegetation and wildlife, profiles of pioneer Benedictine stewards, and meditations and prayers for spiritual renewal, it's "an ideal pocket-guide companion for hikers or for those who simply wish to hold the Arboretum in their hands."

Truly a community effort in the spirit of Saint John's and Saint Ben's, contributions to the book came from monastics, students, faculty, staff, alumnae/i and friends. Proceeds from the sales of the book support Outdoor U and the Abbey Arboretum. Enjoy the read!

Book Signings

Saturday, Sept 12 (Family Weekend)
10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., SJU Bookstore

Saturday, Oct 17 (Homecoming)

Buy the Book

$12.95 (online or in person)
SJU Bookstore

"One of the most beautiful rooms on campus"

The Chapel Trail in the Abbey Arboretum is considered one of the most widely used trails in the state of Minnesota. In July 2015 a group of Saint John's Abbey monks, Outdoor U members and community volunteers installed a new trailhead to punctuate the beginning and ending of your journey hiking along the shores of Lake Sagatagan.

The new Chapel Trailhead is hand-built from white pine harvested at Saint John's, finished with fieldstone columns and western red cedar shingles and benches. Tom Kroll, forester for the Abbey Arboretum, invites you to come see it, "or even better, take a hike through it and into the land that the Abbey has so lovingly stewarded and welcomed guests to for the last 150 years."

Coming in 2016 - Chapel Trail Timber-Frame Bridge

In July 2016, we will begin work on a new timber-frame bridge to replace the decaying concrete block bridge on the Chapel Trail. If you're interested in learning more or getting involved in the project, contact Tom Kroll. **Email:** tkroll@csbsju.edu **Phone:** 320-363-3126

Get Involved

Saint John's Outdoor University

Outdoor Nation Campus Challenge

Sept. 6 - Oct. 17
oncampuschallenge.org

DEFEND OUR TITLE: 2014 National Outdoor Champion!
Get outside. Win awesome gear.

Help Outdoor U make CSB/SJU national outdoor champions again! As you do your favorite outdoor activities during the 6-week challenge this fall - on your own or as part of a class or event - document them with photos and log the activities online. Read more about the challenge on our website. Sign up TODAY!

Nature for the Nation: A Walking Play

Sept. 18 - 20
csbsju.edu/fine-arts

Presented by TigerLion Arts in collaboration with CSB/SJU Fine Arts Programming, Outdoor U and the Abbey Arboretum
Outdoor U Members get 20% off Regular and Senior ticket prices!

An extraordinary, family-friendly experience in the Abbey Arboretum!. *Nature for the Nation* is the mythic telling of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau's mutual love affair with the natural world. *Nature* is performed outdoors as a "walking play." A professional ensemble of actors takes the audience on a hike through the oak savanna as scenes unfold around them. Bagpipes, ancient flutes, drums and rich choral arrangements are intricately woven into the script.

Minnesota Natural History Lecture Series

Monthly
Sept. - Nov., Feb. - Apr.
6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

Free - Students (any age) & Outdoor U members
$5 - Nonmembers, nonstudents

Tuesday, Sept. 29 We are the Ones! Sustainability and Social Justice, *Pandora Thomas*
Monday, Oct. 19 Soils in a Changing Climate, *Joe Storlien*
Monday, Nov. 16 Ferns of the North Woods, *Joe Walewski*

We've got a great line-up for the fall series! Interested in learning more about Minnesota's natural world? Join us each month during the school year for a lecture and discussion on a variety of natural history topics. Check our website to see past topics or for updates to the 2015-16 lecture schedule.

Collegeville Colors: *Where art and nature invite you for a walk.*

Sunday, Oct. 4
1:00—4:00 p.m.

Outdoor U Members: Adult - $4 ($3 pre-reg.) | Youth/Child - FREE
Nonmembers: Adult - $7 ($6 pre-reg.) | Nonmember Youth (ages 4-17) - $4 ($3 pre-reg.)
Nonmember Child - FREE

Enjoy art, theater, music and nature activities as you hike amongst the beautiful fall colors. Nestled along the shores of Lake Sagatagan along the Chapel Trail, you don't want to miss this annual family event!

Annual Outdoor U Photo Contest

Entries due Nov. 10

Free and open to the public

Submit your photos from your adventures outside! Five photos can be submitted in each of four categories. Plants & Critters; Earth, Lake & Sky; People at CSB/SJU; and Best of Outdoor Nation (new this year!). A panel of judges will pick the best photos from each category in three age groups: Under 18; 18-22; 23 & Up. Best in Show will be voted for on Facebook and at the Volunteer/Member Appreciation Open House.

Banff Mountain Film Festival World Tour

Thursday, Nov. 19
7:30 p.m.
Pellegrene Auditorium, SJU

Ticket information TBD

Journey to exotic locations, paddle the wildest waters and climb the highest peaks. The Banff Mountain Film Festival World Tour begins immediately after the Film Festival held every November in Banff, Alberta, Canada. The diverse topics and stunning site locations in the films are unforgettable. Don't miss out!

Save the Dates!

Friday, Dec. 11 Member & Volunteer Appreciation Open House, Great Hall, SJU
Sunday, Jan. 17 The Langlauf at Saint John's, Nordic Ski Race & Tour
Saturday, Jan. 30 Living in the Avon Hills Conference
Saturdays, Apr. 2 & 9 Maple Syrup Festivals

Saint John's Outdoor University Staff:

Thomas Kroll
Saint John's Outdoor U Director
Abbey Arboretum Land Manager
Sarah Gainey
Assistant Director
Envr. Education & YES! Coordinator
Kyle Rauch
Assistant Director
Envr. Education Coordinator
Jenny Kutter
Department Coordinator
Editor, Sagatagan Seasons
MJ Bach
Environmental Education Fellow
Hannah Jungels
Environmental Educator
Dan Vogel
Abbey Arboretum Forest Technician

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Glenn Miller
Greg Miller, OSB
Steve Riendl
Stephen Saupe

Saint John's Outdoor University
2346 Science Drive
P.O. Box 3000
Collegeville, MN 56321-3000

Main Office:
104 New Science Center

320.363.3163
OutdoorU@csbsju.edu
www.csbsju.edu/OutdoorU

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2346 SCIENCE DRIVE | P.O. Box 3000
COLLEGEVILLE, MN 56321-3000

SAGATAGAN SEASONS

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Saint John's OUTDOOR UNIVERSITY

THE PROGRAM

Saint John's Outdoor University provides environmental and outdoor education through classes, events and initiatives with the Abbey Arboretum, Saint John's University and the College of Saint Benedict.

THE PLACE

Saint John's Abbey Arboretum is more than 2,500 acres of lakes, prairie, oak savanna and forest owned by Saint John's Abbey and surrounding Saint John's University.

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